

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claim 8 as follows:

- 1-7. (Cancelled)
8. (Currently Amended) A [N]nucleic acid array[[s]] for detecting nucleic acids by hybridization comprising:  
a plurality [[kinds]] of single-stranded nucleic acid probes for hybridizing to the nucleic acids, said plurality of single-stranded nucleic acid probes being immobilized at different positions on a substrate surface by covalent bonds; and  
products of hydrolysis of maleimide groups present on positions [[on]] at the substrate surface where [[no]] said plurality of single-stranded nucleic acid probes [[is]] are not previously immobilized by covalent bonds.
9. (Original) The nucleic acid arrays according to claim 8, wherein at least one of the covalent bonds exist between a thiol of said single-stranded nucleic acid probes and one of the maleimide groups.

**REMARKS**

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated April 25, 2003 and the phone interview with the Examiner on July 15, 2003. Applicants' representatives conducted a telephone interview with the Examiner on August 28, 2003. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

**Interview Summary**

The Examiner agreed that the major difference between the invention and Chrisey is the timing for applying the SMPB (~ products of hydrolysis of maleimide groups; hereinafter "PHMG"). The Examiner understands that the invention applies PHMG to the slides after some probes are immobilized by covalent bonds, while Chrisey applies PHMG to the slides before any probes are immobilized by covalent bonds.

In this regard, Applicants are further amending claim 8 to recite "products of hydrolysis of maleimide groups present on positions on the substrate surface where no nucleic acid probe is previously immobilized by covalent bonds."

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of

the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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SPF/JCM/JT